

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 411

PS 016 357

AUTHOR Freeman, Margery, Ed.
TITLE Called to Act: Stories of Child Care Advocacy in Our Churches.
INSTITUTION National Council of Churches of Christ, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Carnegie Corp. of New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 62p.
AVAILABLE FROM Child Advocacy Office, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 572, New York, NY 10115 (\$4.00).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Advocacy; After School Programs; Certification; Child Abuse; *Churches; Community Organizations; *Day Care; Disadvantaged; Early Childhood Education; Early Parenthood; Family Day Care; Guidelines; Justice; Peace; Policy Formation; Prevention; Program Descriptions; *Program Development; *Religious Organizations; School Age Day Care; Social Support Groups; Taxes
IDENTIFIERS Georgia (Atlanta); Kansas; Louisiana; New Jersey

ABSTRACT

Experiences of church-based child care advocates are narrated in this booklet. Introductory remarks argue that the National Council of Churches (NCC) must advocate high quality, affordable child care for all children and persuade church members to provide it. Part I tells stories about members' efforts to provide child care services to families: enrolling a disadvantaged child in a day care program, and organizing a church-sponsored after-school family day care program, a drop-in family support center for teen parents, a child abuse prevention project, and a community education program concerning peace and justice issues. Stories in Part II narrate experiences of advocates in organizing their church communities; stories focus on organizing church leaders as advocates of child care licensing for all day care centers in Louisiana, efforts to preserve the tax exempt status of Kansas' churches with child care centers, making child care more affordable to Atlanta's poor families, and using an annual reporting procedure to gather information and raise questions about church child care in every church of Northern New Jersey. Part III provides guidelines for church members interested in becoming child care advocates. Appendices list child care and advocacy organizations and members of the NCC's Child Day Care Project Committee. (RH)

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Stories of
Child Care Advocacy
in our Churches

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Called to Act:

**Stories of Child Care Advocacy
in our Churches**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Called to Act was made possible through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Editor: Margery Freeman

Design: Karen E. Collins

Printing: All Union Press, New York, New York

Published: 1986, by the Child Advocacy Office, Division of Church and Society, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., June R. Rogers, Director.

Our thanks to the women and men whose stories demonstrate what happens when we care and are called to act.

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A Foreword

We seek answers to people's problems, don't we? Selma needs a hearing aid . . . Rose is four months pregnant, but she eats chips and a coke at lunch . . . Ramon and Derek seem so little to be staying alone so late . . .

We seek answers on a larger scale too: I saw Ms. Tyler hit Maxine when I walked down the hall — What do I do now? . . . No, Mrs. Tidwell, there are no centers with subsidies in your neighborhood. Do you know about family day care? . . . So Noah is having nightmares about bombs just like my James. What about the others?

We are in the church, of the church. We seek to strengthen and expand our ministry to children because we know that parents don't just bring their children to a child care program. They bring them to the **church**.

We have chosen to talk about child care advocacy by telling stories, because we believe stories are what we hear best. After all, Jesus was a masterful storyteller, wasn't He?

So we share our stories — and hope that you will find one which strikes a responsive chord. One that elicits a "Yes! We can do that too!"

Which is what advocacy is all about.

We are pleased to bring *Called to Act* to you.

The Staff of the National Council of Churches

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Called to Act:

**Stories of Child Care Advocacy
in our Churches**

Stone Soup Revisited

A Fable

Once upon a time there was a woman with three small children who lived in a one-bedroom apartment in the city. One day the woman said to herself, "I'm going to start a day care center where my children can learn!" So she started off to see her neighbors and invite them to join her.

First she asked her next door neighbor, Mr. Carpenter, to help her build a playhouse for the children. "Oh no!" said Mr. Carpenter, "I have a very important office to build in the City. I don't have time to help you."

The woman then went across the street and knocked on the door of the house where she had often seen a teenager rocking her baby on the front porch. "Would you like to bring your daughter to my new day care center?" she asked when the teen answered the door. "Oh, no!" Ms. Young replied, "I'm too poor to pay for day care!"

Further down the street, the woman went into a big church. "Do you have room for me to start a day care center in your fellowship hall?" she asked the pastor. "Oh, no! I'm very sorry, my dear," Rev. Bustle replied. "We have five important events that take place here at St. Mark's each month. We cannot have a day care center."

So the woman went home.

The next day, the neighbors heard some strange noises outside. Mr. Carpenter peeked out his window just in time to hear the woman call out to her children, "Be careful now, that roof is not very

strong!" Mr. Carpenter looked to see what the woman was talking about, but he saw only her empty yard. But in the middle of the yard the woman and her three children were climbing, swinging, jumping, laughing and shouting to one another as they played.

Mr. Carpenter watched for a long time. Then he turned to his wife. "Don't we have some extra lumber from that last house we built?" And he went and got the wood and brought it over to the woman. "Here," he said, "I will make you a playhouse for your day care center."

A few days later when Ms. Young came out on the porch to rock her baby, she saw several children playing in the playhouse in the woman's yard. "That lady can't take care of so many babies at once," thought Ms. Young. And she went to the woman and said, "I will help you if my baby can come to play too."

A few weeks passed. One day, Rev. Bustle was visiting one of her church members in the same building where the woman lived. The door to the woman's home was open, and when she glanced in, she saw eight or nine little children playing in the front room. "How crowded they are!" she thought to herself. "Maybe we can change some of our meeting times so she can have her day care center in our fellowship hall."

At Halloween, the St. Mark's Day Care Center gave a party. Mr. Carpenter dressed as a witch and cackled over a big pot of cider as he served children drinks. Ms. Young came as a fairy godmother, touching each child with her magic wand and showering them with cookies and raisins. Rev. Bustle was a pumpkin: Every child who reached in her pocket pulled out a toy whistle or horn.

"What a fine day care center you have made!" they all said to the woman.

But the woman just smiled and didn't say a word.



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Introduction

Churches and Child Care: Old Partners in a New Partnership

by The Reverend Eileen W. Lindner

*Associate General Secretary for Unity, Ecumenical Development
and Planning for the National Council of Churches, and Senior
Consultant to the Child Day Care Project*

Churches house at least one-third of the child care programs in the United States today. Willingly or not, we as church people are in the forefront of a growing child care revolution. In every corner of this country, among all races, cultures, denominations, among rich and



poor, we ask, "How shall we best respond to the ever-growing need for child care in our community?"

Perhaps we should first ask, How have churches been doing child care? In 1982, the National Council of Churches surveyed 87,562 churches across the United States to find that out. 25,000 churches responded, one-third of which reported that they housed child care programs — some 14,589 of them. Half of the programs were run by the churches themselves. Half were operated by groups using space in church buildings. Two-thirds were full-day, while one-third were part-day programs. Together these programs were caring for nearly a million young children each day!

The same faith response that had led churches to minister to children and families through foundling hospitals, orphanages, settlement houses, recreational programs, day nurseries, has led us today to provide child care to millions of children. The diversity of church-housed child care discovered by the National Council's survey reflects the churches unique ability to meet shifting community needs. We offer nursery school and after-school care, mom's morning out and summer camp, day care centers and special care programs. This kaleidoscope of services indicates a robust ministry. And a profound responsibility.

Child care is a central feature of American child rearing and family life. This child care "boom" has created an industry whose growth is like no other except perhaps the computer industry. Like boom towns of the goldrush era, our child care growth has occurred without planning and with no policies. Our children are buffeted by confusing winds that blow in the child care field; their teachers are like volunteer firefighters — responding to the child abuse crisis one year, the insurance crisis the next — doing "what is right in their own eyes" with no overall goal and nothing to guide them.

In the face of major changes in how families raise their children,

the church as an institution has remained content to offer daily child care, unaware of the vast policy issues that change has wrought. Until the 1982 NCC study, not one national church denomination had gathered either statistics or stories about children and their families being served in our nation's weekday church programs. The NCC's survey suddenly and dramatically brought to light the extent to which churches have responded to the growing need for child care. Now there is an equally urgent need for the church to lead in setting forth a broad framework to insure that the care our children receive is equitable and of high quality.

The church is called to embrace the art and the science of advocacy. Already the NCC has developed a Child Day Care Policy Statement which has contributed to the national dialogue about child care. We have established a national Ecumenical Child Care Network to link church-housed child care providers with one another. We offer a bi-monthly newsletter, technical assistance, and regional and national conferences to some 18,000 programs.

Our foremost task is to challenge pastors and church leaders to become active and informed advocates for our nation's children in their child care programs. We believe when church congregations recognize the needs of children and families in their community they will be impelled to act on their behalf.

In thirteen years we will enter the 21st Century. The church hymn tells us, "new occasions teach new duties." How will we respond to God's call in this age in which our children spend major amounts of time outside the home while their parents work?

We at the National Council of Churches believe our duty leads us to advocate for high quality, affordable care for all God's children. And then to persuade and encourage you, our church child care sisters and brothers, to join us in this new partnership.



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Part I:

How Do Churches Care — in Our Communities?

For most of us, it begins when we learn that an individual child in our family, our neighborhood, our church, our school, needs help. We reach out to do something. We **know**, we **care**, and so we **act**.

The five stories which follow are about persons who refused to "pass by on the other side." Alene Wyatt's story of a church's outreach to one child does not have a happy ending; but it demonstrates the fragility of our work with families of young children. Rev. Joan Wharton had a vision — and is giving it life right inside Bethel AME Church. Diana Mottershaw was working happily in her "Kids' Club" after-school program — until she looked up and saw so many more school-aged children . . . Paul Stevenson's encounter with an abused three-year-old dramatizes the truth of that old folk wisdom from India: "One who goes looking for ivory will find an elephant attached." Finally, Dale Weiss tells about children at Gentle Dragon who themselves become advocates for God's world of peace and justice.

Who Needs Child Care Today?

- Nearly 60 % of all American children have mothers who work outside the home.
- Nearly 45 % of single mothers and half of all married women with children under three work outside the home.
- Three-fourths of these mothers work because of economic necessity.
- One in four preschool children — and one-half of non-white children — live in poverty.
- Half of unemployed single mothers say lack of affordable child care is the main impediment to their working.



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Alene Wyatt directs the Ithaca Area Church and Community (IACC) Day Care Center which provides child care for over 100 families in space made available by three churches surrounding DeWitt Park in downtown Ithaca, New York (First Presbyterian, First Baptist, and St. John's Episcopal).

Maybe, just maybe, Roger's mother would let him come to our center, because it is in a church.

Roger lives with his mother and handicapped older brother, his grandparents and an uncle in a small apartment. At three, Roger is a child lost in the shuffle. He is not potty-trained. He has no playmates.

Joyce is a member of the Vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church, appointed to serve as liaison between the church and the day care center. On Sunday mornings, Joyce observed Roger in Sunday School, happily playing with the day care center's puzzles, blocks, climber. She recognized that he needed playmates and stimulation.

Joyce approached me about the possibility of enrolling Roger in our program. She explained that Roger's mother was "agency shy" and would not consider Headstart or a publicly-subsidized program. Joyce felt that because our program was in the church — a safe haven — the family would permit Roger to attend.

Joyce brought Roger and his mother to the classroom to talk to the teachers about the program. They were both very excited! Mother agreed to make a special effort to complete Roger's toilet training

with "going to school" as the incentive. (It worked!) The grandparents agreed to provide transportation; teachers agreed to write daily progress reports to Roger's mother. Joyce agreed to serve as liaison between the teachers and mother. "Father Dave's Discretionary Fund" was tapped for most of Roger's fees; the balance came from IACC's scholarship fund, raised from community and church donations.

School started and Roger was ecstatic. He learned to respect limits and soon began to play with his classmates. The teachers felt they were successfully meeting a new challenge with a vulnerable child. Rogers was thriving.

Then winter came. The grandparents had an accident and their car was destroyed. Public transportation was possible, but expensive and time-consuming (buses run once an hour). The family was unwilling to accept regular rides from Joyce or other church members who offered.

Roger was withdrawn from the program. His proud, independent family had trusted Joyce and the church and were beginning to trust the teachers and the center. But they could not continue to be dependent. We can only hope that three months in our program made a little bit of difference in Roger's life.

Reflection

Advocacy is one person caring enough to act.

Joyce knew Roger, she saw his needs. She enlisted support from his family, from the church. She persisted until Roger was enrolled in a child care program.



Diana Mottershaw directs Gather the Children, a school-age family day care network sponsored by the United Methodist Mid-City Parish of San Diego, California. She also founded Kids' Club, an after-school program run in her home for five years.

We are at times aware of how great the need still is; at other times we're awed at what can happen when churches seek ways to intentionally meet a challenge!

Gather the Children began when four persons recognized the need for school-age child care in our community: I was a family day care provider. Sharon Kalemkiarian is on the Wesley School Board which Nancy Mitchell, a diaconal minister, directed. Sharon Anderson needed a place to continue afterschool care for children at her center.

With two other key community leaders, we formed a consortium to develop school-age child care. First, we named ourselves: Gather the Children. Then we set our goal:

"to create and model a school-age child care network as a ministry of the church, utilizing community resources and building a spiritual fellowship of people committed to quality child care."

Next we planned strategy. We asked the Mid-City Parish of the United Methodist Church to sponsor Gather the Children. Not only did they agree to sponsor, but they provided office space, phone, and office services as well. We then surveyed the area for actual needs of the church families and the community. We sent letters to church members, contacted the YM- and YWCA's, inquired of the Child Care Resources Service, visited PTA's and other community groups (even the Halloween Carnival at one school and kindergarten registration at two others!) We visited pastors, parents, principals, and providers to enlist day care providers and find parents needing care. Within one year we were serving over 60 school-age children in twelve family day care homes!

As Gather the Children began to grow, it was hit by the liability insurance crisis; some of our new providers threatened to quit. Sharon Kalemkiarian responded by beginning the Insurance for Child Care Project which she now directs. The Project has grown to benefit not only Gather the Children providers but nearly all of California's child care workers!

We continue to search for ways to be a ministry of the church. In

June, 1986, we started a full-time summer program at one of the Mid-City Parish churches. For two mid-summer weeks we offered Vacation Bible School and invited Gather the Children family day care providers to bring their children. We were pleased when many of them came.

Gather the Children operates under church sponsorship, but it is a non-profit organization which relies solely on funding from foundations, donations, and businesses. Sharon Kalemkiarian writes our grant proposals and keeps us atop the insurance situation. Sharon Anderson continues to direct her preschool and train GTC providers. Nancy Mitchell ministers to the day care homes and keeps phone contact with providers. I keep the homes and children "flowing."

Due to our dreams, efforts, and persistence, we really are meeting the growing need in our community for school-age child care.

Reflection

Advocacy is organizing group action.

Diana and her colleagues recognized the need for school-age child care. They set their goal, then planned a strategy for after-school family day care. A church responded to their careful plans and agreed to sponsor Gather the Children.

Rev. Joan L. Wharton directs the Bethel AME Church Teen Parenting Enrichment Program (Teen-Pep) a family support center in Baltimore, Maryland. Teen-Pep offers supportive services for pregnant teens and teen parents, including child care, education/vocational services, classes on life skills, health care, child and family development, and a special group "For Young Men Only." It also has ongoing social and recreational activities.

Day after day listening to their problems and feeling helpless at times, it became clear to me that they need help, support, and peace of mind.

Several weeks ago, I was reflecting on a vision that was given to me on November 18, 1981 at 3:30 a.m. which woke me out of my sleep. At that time I didn't understand the meaning of it, but now in 1986 I am overjoyed to know that the vision was to work with teen parents.

The problem of "children having children" is urgently calling church leaders to HELP! As the former director of Bethel AME Church's Outreach Center, I had heard the cries of teen parents and felt their needs. Thanks to Rev. Bryant, the pastor of Bethel AME, along with the many organizations in the church, we began to implement workshops, seminars and training classes on Teen Survival; we organized "Teen Speak-Outs" and planned Parent/Teen socials to stimulate parent-teen communication; we created an atmosphere for teens to share their concerns and pressures.



So here we are today at Teen-Pep, a warm, caring drop-in family support center that is meeting the needs of teen parents, their children and their parents.

Since Teen-Pep is a church-based program we do no abortion counseling and we strongly believe in abstinence. And guess what? The teens have no problem with this. Some of them really don't know what abstinence is and others really don't know they can say "no" and mean it. Yet our prevention classes that deal with morals, values, and self-esteem are our largest. Inquisitive teens bring exciting conversation to our groups on human sexuality, anatomy, and female physiology.

We sacrificed blood, sweat and tears getting this program off the ground. We had to renovate, move from one space to another, smell paint on top of paint. We even operated through the installation of a new heating system (with no heat!). We can't forget the ups and downs of managing, the ins and outs of waiting, and the times I thought that we were all alone. Not to mention the sleepless nights



and the 15-hour workdays. And we can't forget the many hours of outreach: telephone calling, transporting teens to and from the program, home visits--just to get most of them in! (Referrals are fine but what about teenagers who would rather ride in a car than catch a bus?) Believe me, we are learning a lot. Patience is a virtue: it pays off, because before you know it, here they come: ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty...and more.

Reflection

Advocacy is keeping a clear purpose.

Joan envisioned the need she wanted to meet. She did not let herself be sidetracked on to other issues. And she transmitted her vision to her pastor and the people of her church.

Paul Stevenson directs Crosstown Day Care Center, a community ministry of the Second Presbyterian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

I believe that God calls us to service in many ways. The call may come in the form of a burning bush, but it comes most often in quiet ways. For us it came in the form of a three year old's tears...

In 1984 when the nation was shocked at the revelations of child sexual abuse, Crosstown responded to parents' concerns by presenting a two-part program for parents and children entitled "Good Touching--Bad Touching: Protecting Your Child from Sexual Abuse and Abduction." This program, growing out of our commitment to meet the needs of parents and children, evolved over the next two years into a ministry that would touch the lives of thousands.

A few days after the program, a distraught young mother whose child attended the Center and had participated in the program came to me for counseling. The mother had not attended the program, but she had read the hand-outs given to parents. Recognizing her daughter's unusual behavior as a warning sign, she responded to the child and got her to open up. During the previous weekend the child's father had sexually assaulted her while she was staying with him. Because of the program, mother and child were able to talk about what had happened: the child was able to express her pain and distress, despite the horrible threats which had been made by her father. The mother knew she could turn to the Center for help.

Prepared by my work on the issue, I was able to refer the mother to a local counseling agency with expertise in counseling victims and families of sexual abuse. Another local church agreed to pay the counseling fee after learning that the mother worked at a minimum-wage job. Still another church provided free legal aid; and a Crosstown staff member accompanied the mother to court to file a protective order to prohibit the father from seeing the child. None of this was painless for the mother or for the staff, but with our support the mother was able to take the steps necessary to end the abuse and start the healing process.

We researched further into the problem of sexual abuse and became convinced that it was a much greater problem than society had recognized. We discovered that at least one out of four girls and one out of ten boys is sexually abused before their eighteenth birthday, most often by someone they know and trust. We found that because of the nature of sexual abuse, prevention education can make a real difference. A sexual abuse offender counts on a child's powerlessness and silence. Sexual abuse prevention education empowers children with knowledge and skills to avoid or stop most sexual abuse. We became convinced that we could and must do something to help prevent other children from experiencing this tragedy.

Crosstown Day Care Center formed the Crosstown Child Abuse Prevention Project and published *All Our Children Strong and Safe: Comprehensive Sexual Abuse Prevention Education for Early Childhood Programs* (1986). The book will be used in day care centers and family day care homes throughout Oklahoma. Crosstown has also been instrumental in developing Gentle Care, a network between child care centers, counselors, and Parents Anonymous (an agency which works with abusive families). The centers provide protective and developmental care for children of abusive families engaged in an intensive three-month program of therapy, personal growth, and

parenting education.

What the future holds for Crosstown and its child abuse prevention project will probably not be the ordinary or the expected. By aligning ourselves with the needs of people we serve rather than tying ourselves to a preconceived idea of what a child care ministry should be, we can remain open to opportunities for ministry in new and exciting ways.

Reflection

Advocacy is empowering others with your knowledge.

Paul learned ways to combat child sexual abuse. Then he shared that information with an ever-broader community until the whole state benefited.



Dale Weiss worked until recently at Gentle Dragon Childcare Center in Seattle, Washington. Gentle Dragon participates in "Children-to-Children Aide," an AMES Project of the Salvadoran Women's Association.

Perhaps we can best transform our communities, our country, and ultimately the world into a peace-loving entity by beginning with our children.

"I don't think it's fair that so many people in El Salvador don't have enough food to eat," remarked one four-year-old as she played with some blocks. "Well," replied her playmate, "maybe we could make them some things and send them money."

Enabling children to understand and overcome atrocities is no simple task, especially in light of advertisements and propaganda that would have us believe we needn't concern ourselves with the human condition.

Churches around the world are speaking out against human rights violations that tear at the heart of that most basic principle, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Gentle Dragon is working with churches to educate our community around issues of peace and justice because we believe education then leads to action.

The children of Gentle Dragon are from diverse ethnic backgrounds since our goal is to be a multicultural center. We have a different cultural focus each month, which broadens the childrens' understanding of the world outside of Seattle. Our non-violent approach to problem-solving gives the children tools with which to

resolve daily conflicts so they can begin to envision a world based on mutual respect and caring.

Gentle Dragon has participated in several campaigns for world peace. We have printed a statement, "Speaking for Children and Families," that expresses our opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America. When five teachers from Central America visited Seattle recently we hosted a forum where they could exchange infor-



mation with U.S. educators and families.

Gentle Dragon participates extensively in the Children Campaign. We seek to raise funds for the Luz Dilian Arevalo Childcare Center, a program for Salvadoran refugee children in Managua, Nicaragua with which Gentle Dragon has established a sister-day care relationship. The two centers have exchanged drawings and letters. Gentle Dragon parents donated money and children purchased school supplies for children in El Salvador. They also put together books of photographs of themselves, drawings, and short letters.

Gentle Dragon works on issues of peace and justice with the church in which we are housed. At a recent open-house for members of the church, we decided to work together on a material aid campaign. We are also planning a meeting of center parents and church members to discuss how we can best teach children about peace and explore their feelings about nuclear war. Part of the program will be folding paper cranes for peace.

Churches and child care centers share a commitment to a loving and peaceful world. Together we can realize a world where young people can grow up with the security of a peaceful tomorrow.

Reflection

Advocacy is making a commitment to act on principle.

The people of the Gentle Dragon community act not out of political expediency or in response to funding guidelines, but out of their witness for peace and justice.



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Part II:

How Do We Organize The Church Community?

More and more we face child care issues that belong especially to the Church, ones that need an ecumenical response or a denominational policy decision. As church leaders begin to step beyond the firm ground of caring for children to the policy arena where ethical and political questions abound, how do we support them?

The following stories tell how individuals and groups challenge the Church. Judy Watts spent five years persuading and organizing church leaders to speak out in favor of child care licensing for all day care centers in Louisiana. Martha Carpenter and Dorothy Berry united church leaders, child care workers and parents across Kansas to preserve the tax exempt status of churches with child care centers. Ginger Slaughter and Nancy Travis collected data about child care inequities through the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta and are now working with the church community to make child care more affordable to poor families in the city. Geraldine Tow's motion at Annual Conference got the Northern New Jersey United Methodist churches to examine how they were doing child care. Now for the first time they ask, "How can we Methodists be better child care advocates?"

Child Care in Churches in the United States — at a Glance

- 2.3 million children enter churches for child care every day of the week.
- For every child in Sunday School, eight children are in church-housed child care on Monday.
- One church in three now houses a child care program.
- The church is the third largest subsidizer of child care (after child care staff who subsidize child care by working for low wages, and after the Federal Government).
- No denomination has bothered to count the number of children in its weekday child care.

Judy Watts is President of Agenda for Children, Louisiana's statewide child advocacy organization. She is also Assistant Director of St. Mark's Community Center, a United Methodist agency in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**Compromises were still necessary, but
finally the opponents of Child Care
Licensing had to give up at least as much as
the proponents . . .**

Louisiana's child care licensing law was repealed in 1980 while no one was paying attention. As a result, young children were often "warehoused" in substandard day care settings; at least one baby died in a day care center as a result of conditions that would not have been permitted in a licensed situation.

There were other results too. The churches and synagogues of Louisiana became advocates for children--a role that most had not previously experienced. A statewide child advocacy organization was born. And Louisiana citizens were finally persuaded to take a closer look at the plight of children in out-of-home care.

The 1980 repeal of child care licensing was not unique to Louisiana. Other states were, and still are, seeing their authority to monitor conditions in out-of-home child care eroded by a relatively small, but very powerful and vocal, group of conservative churches. Opponents to child care licensing see regulatory authority as government intrusion on religion and freedom of choice. Proponents of licensing believe that freedom of choice must stop short of placing children in substandard, sometimes even cruel and dangerous settings; and that the State must have authority to impose minimum



standards of safety and appropriateness on those who care for groups of children, even if those providing care are churches.

Since the primary opposition to child care licensing was based in churches, the most effective support had to come from churches also. It took five years to mobilize enough support to reinstate a child care licensing law in Louisiana. A grant from the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church provided needed funding for time, travel, and other expenses related to the mobilization effort. Once the word was out, hundreds of church members made phone calls, wrote letters, and signed petitions indicating to their state legislators their support for child care licensing. Many faiths, denominations, and church affiliates (including United Methodist, Presbyterian, Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, and Southern Baptist) signed and sent formal resolutions of support for child care licensing, and alerted their constituencies to the need for a law to protect children in out-of-home care.

In the 1985 legislative session, very few senators and representatives could say, as they had in the past, that they "would like to vote for a licensing law, but all of the mail is coming from

opponents."

Louisiana's licensing law contains nearly all of the provisions vital for its effectiveness. Interestingly enough, the only major point lost to compromise was the right to prohibit corporal punishment in child care agencies. Licensing opponents, firmly grounded in theological conservatism, held that licensing regulations could not prohibit corporal punishment with parental permission, at least in privately-funded agencies.

There is still the task of implementation to be done. Thanks to the churches, however, an organization now exists that is paying attention to child care licensing--and to all the needs and rights of children. That organization is Agenda for Children.

Finally, Louisiana has a statewide child advocacy organization. It took an issue to rally around; the vision to see beyond that issue; and the energy to build a coalition that includes churches as a strong component. One-third of Agenda's current membership comes to the advocacy effort from a church connection. And Agenda's effectiveness will depend greatly on the churches' willingness to continue to speak out on behalf of Louisiana's children.

Reflection

Advocacy is accepting defeats without being defeated.

Year after year the Louisiana legislature defeated bills to enact child care licensing. But each year the movement to license gained more allies until finally it passed.

Martha Carpenter directs Children's Day Out, a program of the first Lutheran Church in Topeka, Kansas. Dorothy Berry is Executive Director of the Consultation of Cooperating Churches in Kansas.

The child care bill must pass! More than 5,500 children in child care across the state will be affected.



In January, 1986, child care and the church were confronted with a challenging opportunity in the State of Kansas. The Shawnee County (Topeka) Appraiser had written to approximately thirty area churches that have child care programs, warning them he planned to terminate their property tax-exempt status beginning in 1987 because they allowed a portion of their buildings to be used for child care centers. The appraiser said they had forfeited their tax-exempt status because they were no longer being used "exclusively" for religious activities as required by state statutes.

The challenge was clear! The church and child care communities would have to bind together to come up with a solution. Joan Waggon, a Kansas State Representative, had learned of the appraiser's letter from members of a Topeka church who were trying to begin an after-school program. She and others acted immediately and introduced legislation to preserve the property tax exemption of churches that have child care center activities in their buildings.

The child care bill must pass! Church leaders, child care personnel, and pastors all recognized the threat of taxation and its implications. Surveys revealed that more than 5,500 children in child care across the state would be affected.

Denominations pulled together in a united effort. The Consultation of Cooperating Churches in Kansas supported and helped to coordinate our endeavors. A letter-writing campaign was initiated: all interested parties were encouraged to write to their senators and representatives expressing support of property tax exemption for churches which allow their buildings to be used for non-profit, licensed child care. Petitions were circulated to parents of children in child care programs to inform them of the issue and gain their support for the pending legislation. Church leaders, child care workers, legislators, and county officials met in forums to discuss the issues and answer questions.

Church leaders asked, "Does the state have the right to determine what, in fact, is religious education and activity?" We felt that many learning and human service programs were threatened. A public hearing on two house bills was held in the Topeka area. Many leaders from human service agencies and child care testified to the far-reaching implications for their work if churches were placed on tax roles. Many programs would be cut or abolished because of lack of space or exorbitant costs to operate. Certainly the lives of many people would be affected. The legislators listened carefully and seemed to understand the nature of the problems we described.

Finally, after several anxious months, our efforts were rewarded. The legislature passed House Bill #2695 which defined the use of churches for licensed child care as exclusively religious. We had taken a major step to preserve the tax-exempt status of churches with child care centers.

Reflection

Advocacy is speaking out to legislators and public officials about laws and regulations affecting young children.

The child care bill passed because church and church care leaders organized across the state to inform and educate elected officials about the issue of church taxation.

Nancy Travis directs Save the Children, a non-profit agency with extensive involvement in Atlanta's child care community. Ginger B. Slaughter is a planning consultant with the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, an ecumenical organization also interested in child care. The two agencies have joined during the past year to increase the supply and quality of child care; they have given special attention to the needs of low-income parents.

We are aware that many churches provide child care, but we do not know how many, nor do we know which churches wish to start new programs.



The collaboration between Save the Children and the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta began when Save the Children received a grant to address school-age child care issues. They collected data on families in nine metropolitan Atlanta counties: the number of children under six, those between six and fourteen; the number of children with working mothers; the number of female-headed families; the number of families below the poverty level. These data were compared with the number of slots in licensed day care centers and family day care homes in those counties. The difference between the number of children and families in need of child care and the available supply of care was dramatic.

Following this initial research effort, a more detailed analysis of the metro area was developed by the Christian Council and the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. That analysis revealed which areas had the greatest and which had the least demand for affordable, or subsidized, child care. A large regional map, displaying the results of the analysis, provided a vivid picture of the neighborhoods most acutely in need of affordable child care. An overlay identified the location of churches of eight major denominations and enabled church and denominational leaders to see how impacted their churches were by neighborhoods with a high demand for affordable child care. The map has become an important tool to generate church concern and action.

Save the Children and the Christian Council then hosted a child care seminar for Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches in the metro area, which was attended by 125 people from 39 churches. Over half of the churches were already involved in some kind of week-day programs. Others had an interest in doing something themselves or joining with other churches to serve a low-income area. Each attending church completed a questionnaire regarding their specific programs and problems. Follow-up is underway.

Another conference was co-sponsored by the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, the Georgia Christian Council, the National Council of Churches Ecumenical Child Care Network, and Save the Children. This session was attended by 95 people representing 51 churches and organizations. Following these sessions, Save the Children and the Christian Council have received several requests for technical assistance. A hand-out is being developed by the two organizations showing church leaders how to determine the need for child care in their communities. Funding to hire a staff member to work with churches is also being sought.

Plans are underway to form a church-sponsored child care association. The two organizations have co-sponsored a "How to Start A Day Care Center" workshop and have another session scheduled. Save the Children has applied for funds to involve churches in supporting family day care in inner city areas. The two groups are also looking at day care licensing issues. For the first time in Georgia, an amendment was introduced in the legislature to exempt churches from licensing. In the last session, the amendment passed the Senate but was defeated in the House. It may be reintroduced. The Christian Council and Save the Children will work to oppose the exemption of churches from licensing.

Reflection

Advocacy is doing research and being well-informed.

Vivid graphic data on child care needs is moving many Atlanta churches to active ministry with inner-city families.

Geraldine Tow is Education Supervisor for the Newark Pre-school Council, Inc., the Headstart organization of Newark, New Jersey. She has been active in the Ecumenical Child Care Network, helping it to become established in her state.

The survey seems to have led to a new awareness of child care as ministry...

A couple of years ago I decided to obtain a picture of how much week-day child care was being provided by United Methodist Churches of Northern New Jersey. Having directed three child care programs in three different churches, each with a very different relationship to the congregation, I was curious about the involvement of United Methodist churches in my area. I wondered how they related to their respective congregations, what were their problems or successes. Was there any interest in sharing with one another?

Another lay person, Bettilou Holland, agreed that this could be useful information. She suggested that we survey each church in the Northern New Jersey United Methodist Conference as part of the annual Charge Conference report.

At Annual Conference in June, where all clergy and lay representatives gather to do the business of the church, we brought our recommendation to a workshop on Discipleship. We recommended that all churches survey their weekday child care ministry, and also that a Child Care Task Force be formed to develop the questionnaire and use the information collected as a basis for planning, policy making, and advocacy.

The workshop submitted the recommendation to the Conference floor where it was unanimously approved. The Task Force im-

mediately drew up the questionnaire; almost all churches completed it as part of their Charge Conference report, so the following June we had the results.

We learned that 84 churches were providing weekday child care to 5,000 children and that 3,184 of them were enrolled five days a week. The survey told us which programs were operated by the church and for which the church simply provided space. We learned how programs are governed, what sources of funding they have, what "in-kind" services the churches provide. We also discovered how many programs have worship experiences and Bible stories as part of their curriculum. And we learned what some of the problems and benefits are of this unique ministry.

This year the Child Care Task Force is struggling with how best to meet some of the expressed needs. People have approached us with a number of questions: How do we evaluate the quality of our program? How should the church be involved if the child care program simply uses space in the church building? How can we prevent conflict over use of space, equipment, supplies? How can the church advocate most effectively in our community for children and families? These are some of the issues we will address this year.

Reflection

Advocacy is working with established structures.

An annual United Methodist reporting procedure was used as a vehicle to gather information and raise questions about church child care in every church of Northern New Jersey.



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Part III:

Becoming a Church Child Care Advocate

Now you have read the stories. You wonder, how do I begin?
What are the needs and possibilities in my community?

Where do I begin? How do I challenge my church to respond?



Suggestions for Action*

1. Use the "coffee hour" at your church as a time to discuss child and family issues.

2. Frequently mention children's need for child care in Sunday worship, emphasizing the importance of ministry to all persons.

3. Invite a speaker from a child care center or organization to present an informational program at a church gathering or group meeting.

4. Organize a work day at a child care center.

5. Submit short reports on child care issues and ask to have them printed in your church newsletter.

6. Participate in child advocacy training seminars; recruit and train other church members to be child care advocates.

7. Organize a fundraising activity to benefit a child care program; or set up a scholarship fund in the church to help parents pay for child care if they can't afford it.

8. Arrange a bus tour of child care facilities in or near your community.

9. As a church community, alert local government and business officials to the need for child care and how they can help.

10. Initiate after-church postcard writing campaigns to city council members, state legislators or Congress people about laws and regulations affecting families and children.

11. With other churches and child care organizations, design a community-wide Child Care Day to focus attention on existing programs and services.

* from *A Handbook for the Child Advocate, United Voices for Children, Park Ridge, Illinois (1980)*; and "How Civic Organizations Can Help," *Child Care Action Campaign, New York, New York (1985)*.

On Legislative Advocacy

"In matters of public concern, the churches have a responsibility to make their voices heard. Since child care is of utmost importance to the present and future well-being of society, the church's position on child care is an appropriate public policy concern. Further, as the major provider of child care in the United States, the church has a special responsibility to help raise ethical questions about child care. It is the obligation of the church to advocate a coherent, comprehensive, inclusive, and above all, equitable public policy regarding child care. As it approaches public advocacy for child care, the church must be guided by its concern for all sectors of society."

**— The National Council of Churches
Policy Statement on Child Day Care**

"Adherents of particular faiths and individual churches frequently take strong positions on public issues including vigorous advocacy of legal and constitutional positions. Of course, churches as much as secular bodies and private citizens have that right."

— The United States Supreme Court, 1970

General Guidelines

1. Know your issue and why you are for or against it. Have facts to improve your credibility. Ask for assistance from local, state, and national organizations (See Child Care Advocacy Organizations, p. 48).
2. Contact public officials.
 - by personal visit (home office is best)
 - by telephone (they're listed in telephone book)
 - by telephone (Public Opinion Message [POM] or Mailgram)
 - by letter (one page, to the point, own opinion)
3. Invite public officials to address a church organization.
 - Plan: date, time, place, topic for meeting
 - Publicize: in church bulletin, newsletter, community media
 - Prepare: questions on issue to be discussed
 - Organize: meeting to allow for presentation, questions, summary

Lobbying

Lobbying is advocacy. It requires skill, persistence, time, and a sense of humor to keep things in perspective! The Children's Defense Fund (address on page 48) publishes excellent "how to" books and pamphlets on lobbying for children's issues including:

- **"Where Do You Look? Whom do You Ask? How Do You Know? Information Resources for Child Advocates**, (1980); \$5.50.
- **"Why Lobby for Children?"** (1983); free.



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Resource People To Contact

1. **Your colleagues and friends.** They care what you do. They support your work.

2. **A child's family.** Tap strengths and resources in a child's family. Affirm the family's central role in solving the child's problem.

3. **Individual church members.** Members often welcome specific tasks: a scholarship; eyeglasses; transportation for a medical check-up. Ask them to volunteer!

4. **Teen parents.** Teens can be effective peer counselors and advocates on a key issue affecting their future — their own parenthood!

5. **School principals and child care directors.** These strategic leaders know "key helpers" — politicians and judges, police officers, social workers, doctors, pastors and neighborhood leaders — who have established reputations as "doers" on behalf of children.

6. **Parent organizations** in schools, neighborhoods, and churches. Natural allies in your search for solutions to issues that affect children in your community.

7. **Community organizations:** libraries, community colleges, universities, child care resource and referral centers, parenting groups, home economists in your State Department of Agriculture. These diverse community organizations and individuals have resources to help with special problems.

Appendices

"Called to Act" Storytellers

We are grateful and proud that our colleagues shared their stories; we invite you to contact them to continue your child care advocacy:

Dorothy Berry, Executive Director
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Topeka, Kansas 66604

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1234 Fairlawn Road
Topeka, Kansas 66604

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5380 El Cajon Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92115

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465 Boulevard S.E. — Suite 101
Atlanta, GA 30321

Paul Stevenson, Director
Crosstown Day Care Center
76 N. Zunis Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74110

Geraldine Tow, Education Supervisor
The Newark Preschool Council, Inc.
512 Bradford Avenue
Westfield, New Jersey 07090

Nancy Travis, Executive Director
Save the Children
1182 W. Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Judith H. Watts, President
Agenda for Children
1130 N. Rampart Street
New Orleans, LA 70116

Dale Weiss
Gentle Dragon Child Care Center
3212 E. Terrace
Seattle, Washington 98122

Rev. Joan L. Wharton, Director
Bethel AME Church Teen
Parenting Enrichment Program
1234 Druid Hill Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21217

Alene Wyatt, Director
IACC Day Care Center
315 N. Cayuga Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Advocacy and Child Care Organizations

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Child Advocacy Office/
Ecumenical Child Care
Network

475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 572
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-3342

Commission on Regional and
Local Ecumenism (CORLE)
475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 870
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2158

Partners in Ecumenism (PIE)
475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 870
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2157

American Academy of Pediatrics
141 Northwest Point Blvd.
Elk Grove, Ill. 60007
(312) 228-5005

Association of Junior Leagues
National Child Advocacy Project
825 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022
(212) 355-4380

Center on Child Abuse
& Neglect
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013
(202) 245-2856

Child Care Law Project
625 Market Street, Suite 815
San Francisco, Ca. 94105
(415) 495-5498

Child Welfare League of America
67 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003
(212) 254-7420

Children's Defense Fund
122 "C" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 628-8787

Children's Foundation
1420 New York Ave., N.W.
Suite 800,
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-3300

Church Women United in the USA
475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 812
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2343

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Va 22091
(703) 620-3660

House Select Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families
Room H2-385
House Office Building — Annex 2
Washington, D.C. 20515

League of Women Voters
1730 M Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 429-1965

Legal Services Corporation
400 Virginia Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024-2751
(202) 863-1820

NAACP Legal Defense &
Educational Fund
99 Hudson St. 16th Fl.
New York, NY 10013
(212) 219-1900

National Association for the
Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
1-800-424-2460

National Black Child
Development Institute
1463 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 387-1281

National Committee for
Prevention of Child Abuse
332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 950
Chicago, Il. 60604
(312) 663-3520

National Urban League
500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 310-9000

Parents Anonymous
6733 Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 270
Los angeles, CA 90045
1-800-421-0353
— in CA 1-800-352-0386
— in NY (716) 454-5066
121 North Fitzhugh St.
Rochester, NY 14614

Project Headstart, Office of
Human Development Services,
DHHS,
Washington, D.C.
(202) 755-7782

School-Age Child Care Project
Wellesley College Center
For Research on Women
Wellesley, MA 02181
(617) 431-1453

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Indianapolis, IN 46206

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The United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 840
Nashville, TN 37202

Dr. Nanette Roberts (212) 239-8700
United Church of Christ /
Board of Homeland Ministries
132 West 31st Street
New York, NY 10001

Audrey Russell (212) 696-6788
or (215) 474-4581
Lutheran Church in America
231 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10016

Chiquita Smith (212) 870-3766
The United Methodist Church
Room 1502
475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115

Dr. Jewett L. Walker
(704) 333-3779
African Methodist Episcopal
Zion Church
P.O. Box 30846
Charlotte, NC 28230

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(215) 768-2151
American Baptist Churches
P.O. Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851





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Bibliography

From the **Child Advocacy Office**, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 572, New York, NY 10115:

—**Policy Statement on Child Day Care**, passed by the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches (1984) 25¢.

—**When Churches Mind the Children: A Study of Day Care in Local Parishes**, by Eileen W. Lindner, Mary C. Mattis, June R. Rogers, The High/Scope Press, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 (1983) \$10.00.

—**Helping Churches Mind the Children: A Guide for Church-Housed Child Day Care Programs** (1984) \$4.00

—**A Place for Growing: Child Care in the Church** (1985) videotape rental: \$10.00

—**Ecumenical Child Care Newsletter** (bi-monthly); free to ECCN members.

From the **Children's Defense Fund**, 122 "C" Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20001

—**"It's Time to Stand Up For Your Children: A Parent's Guide to Child Advocacy"** (1979)

—**"Child Care: Whose Priority?"** (1985) A State Child Care Fact Book

—**"Where Do You Look? Whom Do You Ask? How Do You Know? Information Resources for Child Advocates** (1980) \$5.50.

—**"Why Lobby for Children?"** (1983) Free.

—**"In Celebration of Children: An Interfaith Religious Action Kit"** (1982).

—**"A Children's Defense Budget: An Analysis of the President's Budget and Children"** (published yearly).

—**"Building a House on the Hill for Our Children,"** CDF's Public Policy Network (1980).

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—**A Handbook for the Child Advocate,** D. Coyd Taggart, United Voices for Children, 1661 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge, Illinois 60068 (1980).

—**Parenting Skills: Communication and Advocacy, a Faith Community Resource,** United Church Press, New York (1983)

Additional copies of this booklet are available for \$4.00, including postage and handling, from:

*Child Advocacy Office,
National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 572
New York, New York, 10115*